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SIPDIS

ROME FOR U.S. MISSION
GENEVA FOR RMA
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SUBJECT: WFP AID FOR BHUTANESE REFUGEES: LEG UP ON NEXT
PHASE

1. An extra multilateral contribution secured this week from WFP Rome will fill a gap created by the delay in receiving a USG shipment of in-kind food aid, reports the WFP Deputy Country Director for Nepal. The extra contribution will have a carry-on effect for the next phase of aid to the Bhutanese refugees, which runs from July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003. As yet no contributions have been pledged for the coming plan year, but the carry-on means that WFP will have sufficient quantities of primary commodities to see the refugees through most of August, 2002.

2. The story of the delay in the delivery of the in-kind contribution has been circulating among UN and NGO staff working in the refugee camps. Several raised it with the Ambassador during his visit to the camps March 25. This is the first time in-kind aid has been sent to the refugees, and Post initially heard concerns that in-kind aid would have a negative impact - both financially and psychologically - on the local producers and suppliers whose produce has fed the camp populations for ten years. This view was not heard during the March 25 visit, however. To the contrary, one UN staffer speculated that news of the in-kind delivery may prompt local suppliers "to get their act together."

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